



Early childhood education

Advisory service

The challenge

No other education area has such a positive outcome for individuals and the society as early childhood education. The earlier and the better children are supported, the more positive the effects are regarding educational, social, health and economic aspects over the entire life span. The international community has recognized this and committed itself to ensuring that by 2030 all girls and boys have access to high-quality early childhood education, care and pre-school education. In many countries, however, this Sustainable Development Goal is still far from being achieved. Only two in ten children in many of our partner countries attend pre-school care. Children from marginalized social groups, refugee children, but also children with disabilities are often excluded from early childhood education. This has negative consequences for their entire lives. The quality of existing childcare services is often inadequate. Pre-schools frequently resemble more mini-schools than inspiring child centered early learning arrangements. All too often, developmentally appropriate educational opportunities, creative play, painting, playing music and romping around are neglected there.

Our approach

We support our partners in the expansion of quality early childhood education opportunities. We work in a partner-oriented manner with the ministries of education (macro level), with regional authorities and research institutions (meso level) and directly with private and state pre-schools and kindergartens as well as with families and the community (micro level). Our long-standing experience as an intermediary between ministries of education, educational institutions, further education institutes and civil society are of benefit here. Real improvements are only possible

through reforms of the public education system. This is at the center of our approach.

Our services

Our services aim to create additional, quality and barrier-free childcare places so that more children are given the opportunity of early childhood education. Children should be taught together, regardless of their gender, nationality and performance, so that they learn social co-existence from the very beginning. In order to achieve these goals, we work together with everyone involved - from ministries to parents. We support the ministries in making inclusive pre-school opportunities available throughout the country. In this context, we are also improving the internal processes in the ministries, the professional development and capacities of the employees and the co-operation with the regional authorities and all ministries involved. Where public services reach their limits, we co-operate with non-governmental organizations to create additional childcare facilities. An important aspect of our work is the training of early childhood teachers and caretakers. We focus on childhood didactics. However, the educators also learn how to develop play materials from simple, locally available resources that encourage the creativity of the children. In addition, we train caregivers to lead play groups for infants under four years of age. These playgroups receive basic equipment that is also appropriate for children with disabilities. We build on the results of early childhood educational research to develop our approaches. We focus on the application of pedagogical research results and promote the expansion of expert networks and regional conferences so that up-to-date knowledge is available quickly. Cooperation with parents is central to early childhood education. Our services for parents teach them how to support their children as best they can and how their children benefit from this support. This includes information about child-friendly games, health care



and children's rights. We strengthen families with children who have special learning needs or whose development is delayed via an „Early Home Intervention Program“. The aim is to ensure that all children can attend pre-school. In order to reduce possible concerns on the part of parents, we use easily accessible information and sensitization services: apps, interactive radio formats and educational plays.

The benefits

Investing in good early childhood education is one of the most efficient way to promote long-term economic productivity and social development. Early childhood education contributes to social learning and interaction. Scientific evidence show that the promotion of early childhood education has a significantly higher cost-benefit ratio than any other area of education. Early childhood education demonstrably increases school success, the later employment rate, the individual's lifetime earnings and life expectancy. Children from low-income, educationally disadvantaged families benefit even more from early educational opportunities than children from better-off families. If parents are involved in the early support of their children, positive effects on the development of the children, the quality of pre-school care and the educational style. Non-violent education is promoted. Organized childcare also creates free space for parents. It allows them to take on a job or to further their education.

An example from the field

There are about 3.6 million Syrian refugees living in Turkey, including 300,000 infants who were born in Turkey. Together with Turkish children, our project provides these children with educational and care services. This will promote their development and make their entry into school easier. But the aim is also to improve the relationship be-

tween Syrian and Turkish children and their families. Our approach is diversified. On the one hand, we help women's groups to offer self-organized childcare. On the other hand, we train educators and pre-school teachers so that they can support children in a playful and age-appropriate way. At the same time, we maintain contact with parents and introduce them to "Positive Parenting". This educational program focuses on communication between parents and children. In this way, parents should be able to better accompany the development of their children.

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